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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the subject of communication apprehension and presents five group-based exercises for the basic public speaking course. The paper notes that communication apprehension can affect people's personal and occupational lives, and that visualization, skills training, and systematic desensitization are methods that can help control communication apprehension. The first exercise in the paper uses the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension to give students the opportunity to assess their own levels of communication apprehension. The purpose of the second exercise in the paper is to increase students' awareness of the importance of introductions and conclusions to the overall effectiveness of a speech. The third exercise in the paper provides students with a practical way to do a "mini" audience analysis using magazine advertisements. The purpose of the fourth exercise is to increase students' awareness of ethical issues in public speaking and the public speaking classroom. The fifth exercise in the paper celebrates diversity and promotes knowledge of other cultures, ethnicities, languages, and religions. Contains three references. (RS)

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Uniting Traditions: Incorporating Group-based Exercises In The Basic Public Speaking Course

A Panel Presented to
The Basic Course Interest Group
At The 1995 Central States Convention,
Indianapolis, Indiana

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April 22, 1995

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Communication Apprehension

Lecture/Discussion Notes

PRCA-24

Introductions and Conclusions

"Create an Intro & Conclusion" Exercise

Audience Analysis

"Slick Sellers" Exercise

Ethics

"You Be The Instructor" Exercise

Delivery

"My Ethnicity" Speech Instructions

Communication Apprehension
Lecture/Discussion Notes

OK, picture this: you're getting ready to speak to your peers. You've practiced your speech, and you know you've gone through training to be able to present, yet you are nervous. Your stomach feels like it's somewhere up in your throat, you are sweating all your make-up off, and your skirt isn't long enough to hide your knocking knees! Is there anything that can be done?

Yes, there is. But before we can talk about how to control communication apprehension, we need to know exactly what CA is:

CA is the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons.

How do you know if you have this? *Stop now and have the group volunteer symptoms! Discuss and move on.* Possible responses are:

A. shaking
B. sweating
C. stuttering
D. forgetfulness
E. excessive movement or no movement
F. inability to make eye contact, etc.
G. a refusal to communicate or take part in communication

Why is CA important?
1. it influences how others react to you
2. it influences how you feel about yourself

But try not to make any judgements about yourself or others based on CA just yet. Ninety percent of all people experience some form of CA, so to experience CA is quite normal. Before we talk about how to ease your symptoms of CA, let's look at the rationale for controlling CA.

CA effects your personal and occupational lives. We will focus on occupational effects. Think back to the symptoms of CA. When those are manifested and recognized by others in your work environment, several things begin to happen.

A. you are less likely to be seen as a leader
B. you are less versatile in communication, for example, it is harder for you to adapt to changing circumstances

C. work relationships suffer due to lack of expression
D. you cannot take part in either or all of the following: group discussions, presentations, one-on-one conversations, certain situations (talking with a boss, co-worker, etc.)
E. you are devalued as a co-worker, miss out on interpersonal enrichment, can't express creativity & intelligence

CA is very difficult to conquer, but it can be controlled with work. Three methods to help control CA:

A. **Visualization**: Think of yourself completing the communication event and being successful! Although this might be difficult initially, it is important to visualize your success. *This technique really works and is the single most successful technique.*
B. **Skills Training**: Actually acquiring the skills that facilitate effective speaking. This is a main focus of INCO 103.
C. **Systematic Desensitization**: This involves repeated exposure to speaking over time. The idea is that you gradually become sensitized to speaking experiences, and your comfort level increases.

Combining all three methods, or using only the visualization method are the two most successful ways to combat CA. Each individual student, however, is responsible for visualization, while 103 is designed to train and sensitize students.

References

Daly, J. A., & McCroskey, J. C. (1984). Avoiding communication: Shyness, reticence, and communication apprehension. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Grice, G. L., & Skinner, J. F. (1993). Mastering public speaking. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (1989). Communication:Apprehension, avoidance, and effectiveness (2nd ed.). Scottsdale, Arizona: Gorsuch Scarisbrick, Publishers.

Personal Report Of Communication Apprehension

Purpose: To give students the opportunity to assess their own levels of communication apprehension.

Instructions: Distribute the Personal Report Of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) and instruct students to complete the inventory at home. Inform students that the PRCA-24 will help them highlight which communicative areas are the most uncomfortable for you: group discussion, meetings, interpersonal conversations, or public speaking, all of which you will face in your profession. Being aware of their problem areas will allow students to tailor this class to their needs.

Recommendations: *Offer to discuss the scale if they have any questions, but individual scores should never be discussed in class.* For details on interpretation of PRCA score, see Richmond, V.P. and McCroskey, J. (1989). Communication apprehension, audience, and effectiveness (2nd ed.). Scottsdale, Arizona: Gorusch Scarisbrick Publishers.

(1) - or a family narrative
- up events
1. funny stories
2. transition events

(2) create a comm model - 3-D
- talk about perceptions in grps. - then expand to class

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Personal Report Of Communication Apprehension (PRCA 24)

Directions: This instrument is composed of twenty-four statements concerning feelings about communicating with other people. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree. Please just record your first impression.

_____ 1. I dislike participating in group discussions.

_____ 2. Generally, I am uncomfortable while participating in group discussions.

_____ 3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.

_____ 4. I like to get involved in group discussions.

_____ 5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.

_____ 6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.

_____ 7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.

_____ 8. Usually I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.

_____ 9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.

_____ 10. I am afraid to express my feelings at meetings.

_____ 11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.

_____ 12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.

_____ 13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.

_____ 14. I have no fear of speaking in conversations.

_____ 15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.

_____ 16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.

_____ 17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.

_____ 18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.

_____ 19. I have no fear of giving a speech.

_____ 20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.

_____ 21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.

_____ 22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.

_____ 23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.

_____ 24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

The PRCA permits computation of one total score and four subscores. The subscores are related to communication apprehension in each of four common communication contexts: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking. To compute your scores merely add or subtract your scores for each item as indicated below.

Subscore Desired	**Scoring Formula**
Group discussion	18 + scores for items 2, 4, and 6; - scores for items 1, 3, and 5.
Meetings	18 + scores for items 8, 9, and 12; - scores for items 7, 10, and 11.
Interpersonal conversations	18 + scores for items 14, 16, and 17; - scores for items 13, 15, and 18.
Public Speaking	18 + scores for items 19, 21, and 23; - scores for items 20, 22, and 24.

To obtain your total score for the PRCA, simply add your four subscores together. Your score should range between 24 and 120. If your score is below 24, or above 120, you have made a mistake in computing the score.

Introductions and Conclusions

Purpose: To increase students awareness of the importance of introductions and conclusions to the overall effectiveness of a speech.

To give the student practice in developing an introduction and conclusion for a speech.

"Create An Introduction" Exercise

Diversity in our Universities

Amy Morehead (Ohio University)

Sample Speech Body

According to a publication entitled *International Perspectives*, there are over 11 million students in American Universities, and 300,000 of them are from other countries.[1] My first reason for encouraging your support and that of our government is that the presence of these students promotes international understanding. Our education is enriched by their academic and cultural contributions. We experience this cultural diversity every day at this university by living with people from nearly 100 countries. They bring their culture to us in the dormitories, in the cafeterias, during the international street fair, on their independence days, and especially in the classroom.

How do international students foster world understanding? Both parties benefit when American students study with students from around the globe. International students, for instance, say that they benefit from the experience. A study published by the American Institute for Foreign Study reveals the benefits. One hundred percent of the exchange students report higher levels of maturity, over 70 percent report increased adaptability, and over 85 percent gained important knowledge of another culture.[2] But American students also gain from the relationship with students from other cultures. Nichole Baker, a junior who has cultivated friendships with international students for the last three years, says, "International students are quite an asset to our university. They make students in the United States aware of the life-styles led in other countries."[3]

Besides this first benefit of better global cooperation, the presence of international students on campus brings a second benefit. Their presence whets American students' competitiveness both in admissions and in overall achievement. Of the 16,374 students enrolled last fall on this campus, 1,345 students were from other countries according to the International Student Report.[4] This number was a 13 percent increase over the previous year. The important point is that students from this state must compete with intelligent students from around the world to gain admission and to maintain high grades.

I know from my own experience that I work harder when I am competing for success. Some recent studies suggest that students from other countries perform better than American students in school. I see these results as a challenge, a motivator for achievement.

Global cooperation and college competition are just two of the benefits of having international students. A third point is what international students do to encourage world peace. A statement in the Quarterly Report notes "a growing perception of America's interdependence within the world and hence our need to interact with other countries to achieve basic economic, political and security goals. It has also been stimulated by periodic studies indicating the lack of global awareness on the part of the American polity."[5]

Foreign relations for many years has been an important point of interest in the world. If increased federal aid were given to the most diverse universities, then more international students would be admitted to our systems. Through relationships formed on campus and in the community, better foreign relations would develop. Being educated together can help reduce world conflicts.

The endnotes for this speech: [1]Bill Getz, *International Perspectives* (Greenwich, CT: American Institute for Foreign Study, 1988); [2]Getz; [3]Alan W. Boyd, *International Student Report* (Ohio University: International Student and Faculty Services, fall 1990); Ricard C. Remy and Robert B. Woyach, *Quarterly Report* (Ohio State University: Mershon Center, autumn 1983).

"Create An Introduction" Exercise

Diversity in our Universities

Amy Morehead (Ohio University)

Sample Speech Introduction

Recently in a speech communication course, the class discussed the following resolution: "The federal government should increase federal aid to the most culturally diverse universities." The discussion forced me to consider where I stood on this issue. The cultural diversity that I want to consider is not that of race, gender, or age, but that of international culture, of international students. And the federal aid that I want to invite is that of financial assistance for colleges and universities that cultivate this kind of diversity. Naturally, I hope that after hearing my speech you will agree that the benefits of having cultural diversity through international students should result in federal support.

Sample Speech Conclusion

Today I have tried to focus on the importance of diversity on campus, specifically the importance of having international students in our midst. I have encouraged support for federal money for those universities that diversify their student bodies. As I illustrated through my main points, international students inspire cooperative efforts, encourage competition for admission and grades, and promote world peace.

In closing, I ask you this: does it seem proper for federal aid to be increased to the most culturally diverse universities? Ours is a very diverse community, a community that would benefit from the financial support which encourages cultural diversity. I think our answer should be "yes."

Audience Analysis
"Slick Sellers" Exercise

One of the first steps in preparing a speech is to determine the demographic and psychological makeup of an audience through an audience analysis. Every day radio, television, newspaper and magazine advertisers utilize the audience analysis in advertisements. In this same way, you can provide your students with a practical way to do a "mini" audience analysis using magazine advertisements.

Instructions: First, have a variety of magazines on hand or ask the students a few days before to bring magazines to class. Next, break the class into small groups. Have each group elect a spokesperson who will go to the area where the magazines are spread out to select a magazine for analysis. Then, the group will select an advertisement that they would like to examine. You should instruct your students to analyze the product being advertised and who the intended audience is. Then ask the group to provide a demographic analysis including age, income, education level, origin and sex of the intended audience. After the groups have had time to analyze their information, each spokesperson should report to the class the audience analysis they conducted for their advertisement. After each group, you can add or correct information and use that time for further discussion. This exercise can also be adapted for a lecture on persuasion and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Ethics

Purpose: To increase the students' awareness of ethical issues in public speaking and the public speaking classroom

To give the student the chance to explore the issues surrounding the balancing ethics and freedom of speech

Ethics
You Be The Instructor Handout

You are the instructor for the Introduction to Public Speaking Course and have to review and/or evaluate student speeches from an ethical perspective. Your group should read the scenario assigned to you and determine (1) whether or not the speech/topic or delivery is ethically appropriate for the classroom; (2) How the student can deliver the topic in the most ethical manner. In answering these questions, your group should list the issues to be considered and how you will handle them.

Scenarios

(1) A speaker is scheduled to give a persuasive speech on pornography. When it is time for this student to present, the speaker brings out sexually explicit visual aids to illustrate the main points and proceeds to show the materials during the speech.

(2) A speaker plans to do a persuasive speech on the music industry. She plans to show rock and rap videos that have obscene and graphic language.

(3) A speaker, who is a Neo-Nazi, wants to do an persuasive speech praising Adolf Hitler.

(4) A speaker gave a speech on cults and described the Branch Davidians in detail, claiming to have been a member for 2 years. After the speech, you hear her bragging to a friend that she never was in the cult and only used that example for effect.

Delivery
"My Ethnicity"

Purpose: To celebrate diversity and promote knowledge of other cultures, ethnicities, languages, religions, etc.

Many times students, especially freshmen, are apprehensive about choosing a speech topic. For this reason, assigning a topic might be particularly helpful. Requiring students to give informative speeches about their ethnicity provides an excellent outlet for diversity celebration within the overall objectives of 103. Moreover, the ethnicity speeches are easy for the audience to listen too; Americans tend to know little about other cultures. Additionally, many students know little about their own heritage and this speech gives them an "excuse" to research their culture. Finally, this can serve as a way to build "community" within the classroom.

Considerations: Some students feel uncomfortable speaking about their ethnicity, or might feel there is nothing interesting about it. Be certain to encourage students to research ethnic groups they might not be a member of, but are interested in. The same recommendation can be made for informative speeches on religion, language, etc. Make the assignment as open as possible. ***Be certain to give students positive feedback about cultural disclosures they might make.***

Some instructors might find this assignment appealing because it is unlikely students will be able to "copy" a speech given two quarters ago.

Time required: 4-5 minutes per student

Coordinates with: Material on informative speeches, material covered early in the quarter.

Recommendation: On the first day of class, alert students that any noise, movement, signal, words, or expression deemed disruptive or disrespectful by you in response to information about another culture or cultural practice will be greeted by an "F" or some other equally unappealing negative sanction.